

THE **BERLIN** **DAILY** **No 7** **Hollywood** **REPORTER**

THR.COM/BERLIN

FEBRUARY 12, 2014

Mit dem Zweiten sieht man besser



**Im Alphabet
kommt Qualität
vor Quote.
Bei uns auch.**

Safe House mit Denzel Washington
demnächst im ZDF



10 Jahre Offizieller Medienpartner

64

Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin



LA PLAGES ROYALE

AU FESTIVAL DE CANNES 14-25 MAY 2014



Photo credits: Zap Events & PR: 50-Year Anniversary of the Swedish Film Institute, Plage Royale in Cannes

A stylish and effortlessly sophisticated event space for hire with 500sqm covered area and 250sqm of outside terrace, La Plage Royale is equipped with comprehensive light and sound and a professional and experienced team on site to fully cater to your events individual needs.



FOR FURTHER DETAILS OR TO CHECK AVAILABILITY

JOJO DYE TEL: +44 (0) 7768 986115

EMAIL: JOJO@JJDCONSULTANCY.COM



THE *Hollywood* REPORTER

FEBRUARY 12, 2014 | THR.COM/BERLIN | No. 7

BERLIN
WEATHER
AND HIGH
TEMPS

TODAY
46° F
8° C

TOMORROW
43° F
6° C

CONNOLLY SCORES WITH *GIRLS*

By Pamela McClintock

Before beginning filming on Doug Ellin's *Entourage* movie in earnest, Kevin Connolly decided to go on an unusual solo adventure — selling a project to foreign buyers for the first time.

Last weekend, Connolly arrived at Berlin's European Film Market for *The Wright Girls*, an Atlas Independent comedy he is directing that stars Jessica Alba (he also directed her in the upcoming pic *Dear Eleanor*). During back-to-back buyer meetings at the Ritz-Carlton that left him hoarse, Connolly explained his vision for the film, which follows two female sitcom stars and roommates



Connolly

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Jones Cast in *Shuddering*

By Borys Kit

January Jones has signed on to star in *The Shuddering*, a supernatural thriller to be directed by George Ratliff.

Cargo Entertainment is handling international rights to the project and is introducing it at EFM.

Shuddering, with a script by David Coggeshall (*The Haunting in Connecticut 2: Ghosts of Georgia*), is a supernatural thriller following a woman (Jones) who returns to the town where she first began to experience strange visions.

Production is scheduled for summer 2014 after Jones

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



From left: Viggo Mortensen, director Hossein Amini and Daisy Bevan attended the Berlinale Special Gala for their film *The Two Faces of January* on Feb. 11.

Don't Worry, Cannes Will Be Better

A scarcity of buzzy titles and big-ticket deals during this year's EFM left dealmakers discouraged but looking forward to doing business in the South of France By Stuart Kemp and Pamela McClintock

A distinct lack of hot projects and major deals during this year's EFM left buyers and sellers all looking hopefully toward Cannes to ignite a flurry of dealmaking.

EFM attendees cite numerous reasons for the slowdown at a market most had predicted would offer at least some big-ticket titles ahead of it.

A lack of strong product was chief among them.

"There really haven't been a lot of projects, certainly no massive title that everyone is raving about," says Christian De Gallegos, International Film Trust sales chief.

The thin list of projects at the early stage that did spark buyer interest included M. Night Shyamalan's *Labor of Love*, with Bruce Willis in talks to reteam with the *The Sixth Sense* filmmaker.

Modestly budgeted projects also attracted buyers.

The Solution enjoyed brisk business with two of its 2014 Sundance Film Festival titles, *Laggies* and *Infinitely Polar Bear*, while Kegeyan continued to sell the horror comedy *Cooties*, which also made its

premiere at Sundance in January.

Mister Smith Entertainment's *Love, Rosie* with Lily Collins and Sam Claflin is likely to sell out.

Open Road Films nabbed U.S. rights to John Hillcoat's upcoming heist thriller *Triple Nine* and *Rock the Kasbah*, the all-star comedy being directed by Barry Levinson and starring Bill Murray.

FilmNation brought three new titles that drew interest: *The Imitation Game*, starring Benedict Cumberbatch, the Daniel Craig courtroom drama *The Whole Truth* and John Carney's next film, *Sing Street*.

"We had an excellent market," says FilmNation CEO Glen Basner. "Strong sales across all three of our new titles and our promo reel screening for *The Imitation Game* ... was also the highlight of the market itself."

German distributor Concorde also had a relatively robust EFM, picking up three titles: period drama *Suffragette* starring Carey Mulligan and Helena Bonham Carter from Pathe, and two projects from

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

THR HEAT INDEX



STEVE MCQUEEN

The British director's 12 *Years a Slave*, already a leading Oscar contender, grabs another award, earning the Most Valuable Movie of the Year award at Berlin's annual Cinema for Peace gala Monday night.



LARS VON TRIER

The Danish master of festival scandal piled on the penises for his director's cut of *Nymphomaniac*, Vol. 1 but after all the foreplay — *Shia LaBeouf's* antics aside — reception at the Berlinale was flaccid.



HANS-JOACHIM FLEBBE

Berlinale ticket sales are up 4 percent compared to this time last year, a boost that can be partially attributed to the addition of the Zoo Palast as a venue. The exhibition magnate's \$6 million renovation of the cinema has won plaudits for upping the fest's glamour quotient.

KNOW YOUR DEALMAKER

Maren Kroymann
M-appeal

The Berlin-based CEO's world sales group has been generating heat with a pair of LGBT titles. The Hungarian drama *Land of Storms* was snatched up by TLA Releasing for North America, the U.K., France and Poland, while *Two Mothers* sold to TLA for the U.K., France, Benelux and Poland.

CORRECTION Dimitri Verhulst's *The Latecomer* tells the story of a man who decides to escape his wife by pretending to have Alzheimer's. *The Misfortunates* was his 2006 book (*THR* Daily 2/10/14).

Circle Paints Portrait of Gay Pioneers

Stefan Haupt's 1950s-set film chronicles the golden era of an underground club that provided an LGBT safe haven

By Georg Szalai

Amid Russia's antigay laws and a backlash against the LGBT community in other countries, Swiss filmmaker **Stefan Haupt** has brought a gay love story that also traces the birth of a pioneering underground organization for gay emancipation to the Berlinale.

His film *The Circle* (*Der Kreis*), which weaves in conversations with the two men whose story it tells in a mix of documentary and fiction, screened Monday night in the Panorama section.

The tale begins in Zurich in the 1950s, when teacher **Ernst Ostertag** meets drag performer **Robi Rapp** in *Der Kreis*, an underground club spawned by a magazine of the same name that allowed gay people to socialize, leading to an era of legendary costume and theme balls. *Der Kreis* became a role model for similar magazines and groups in Germany, Denmark and L.A.

"My brother is gay, and I was the only one in the family to know for about a year," Haupt tells *The Hollywood Reporter*.



Through him, he knew the story of Rapp and Ostertag, who in 2003 became the first gay couple in Switzerland to register their union. Then two producers approached Haupt and asked if he would write and direct a movie about them.

The party and secrecy elements were ones that lent themselves to cinematic treatment. "People came to Zurich to party and live out their desires and then returned to their life incognito," because homosexuality wasn't legal in such countries as Germany, Haupt says. At the balls, "you could only enter with a membership card or with a

friend. It was all incognito."

The filmmaker says he originally didn't plan to include documentary-type elements. "I was looking to do a co-production with Germany," he recalls. "But we didn't get anything from Germany ... so, we made it docufiction, which made it cheaper and allowed us to integrate the now-84-year-old protagonists."

How much skin does the film show? "Too much for the Americans," quips Haupt. "But I don't find it brave or radical to show a lot of skin. I don't even show a single penis, except for two drawn ones." **THR**

Palestinian Subject of Short Film Faces Deportation

Abu Eyad, in Berlin to promote director Mahdi Fleifel's 2013 award-winning doc *A World Not Ours*, initially was told he could remain in Germany

By Alex Ritman

The star of an award-winning documentary that screened at the Berlinale last year and a short premiering this time around now faces deportation from Germany. **Abu Eyad**, who came to the festival in 2013 to help promote **Mahdi Fleifel's** *A World Not Ours*, which delves into the restrictive life experienced by Palestinians living in Lebanon's Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp and picked up the festival's Peace Film prize, initially had been told he would be able to stay.

"Following the screening last year he asked about staying as there was no possibility of him returning to Lebanon after having shown the film here and the impact it had made," Fleifel tells *The Hollywood Reporter*. "The festival said that they were fine with that and that they'd had these situations before. As it happens, a lawyer came to the screening and offered his help, so he

was recommended to apply for a residence."

The Danish director says he now thinks Eyad, 32, should have applied for political asylum. "This way they wouldn't have been able to send him back," Fleifel says. "But because he came in with a tourist visa and then decided to stay, his application was rejected. Now he's been told he has three months."

In *A World Not Ours*, Eyad manages to escape the Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp, travel into Europe and land in Greece, only to find himself trapped in a country experiencing economic collapse and forced to return. The story is picked up in Fleifel's short documentary *Xenos*, screening in Berlin this week.

Says Fleifel: "Finally, after everything that happened in this and then making it to Germany, where there was hope for him to get some work or a life, now he's being sent back to zero." **THR**



Fleifel (left) and his subject, Abu Eyad, at last year's festival.

Brett Ratner to Co-Finance Holocaust Doc

By Clifford Coonan

RatPac Documentary Films, Brett Ratner's documentary company, has taken North American rights to *Night Will Fall*, a companion piece to Alfred Hitchcock's 1945 doc on the Holocaust.

Ratner is co-financing the completion of the doc, which is a work-in-progress getting its world premiere in Berlin, in return for which he received North American rights. "It's not a formal acquisition because the film isn't complete. We are financing completion," Ratner tells *THR*. He described the project as "awesome."

The film is being directed by Andre Singer, who produced *The Act of Killing*, and features footage of concentration camps shot by the British Army Film Unit in 1945. Hitchcock took part as adviser next to director Sidney Bernstein. **THR**

David Kross Joins Cast of *Boy 7*

By Scott Roxborough

German star David Kross (*The Reader*) has boarded amnesia thriller *Boy 7*, a German adaptation of a Dutch project, which Hamster Film and Action Concept will co-produce. Kross will play an 18-year-old boy who wakes up in a crowded subway with no idea who he is or how he got there. He soon realizes his life is in danger. German actress Emilia Schule, who this weekend won the Golden Camera in the best newcomer category, will co-star as Kross' accomplice.

Director Ozgur Yildirim, whose feature debut, crime pic *Chiko*, premiered at the 2009 Berlinale, will direct, with shooting to begin in April. **THR**

THE 2014 BERLIN POSTER AWARDS



THR pays tribute to the most amusing and over-the-top promotional materials at the European Film Market



Best Shelf-Rider

Narx (USA)

This Bronx-set undercover thriller was shot back in 2011 and it's only mellowed with age, like a fine box of wine.



Most Troubling Typeface

The Assignment 1.0 (France)

It literally took us 10 minutes to figure out if this title was *The Assignment I.D.*, *The Assignment I.O* or *The Assignment 1.0*. That's valuable time we could've spent wondering if orange was the only color loaded into the printer.



Not a Movie About Strippers

Duke (USA)

But you're not sure, right? That hat looks just big enough to have fallen out of the *Magic Mike* props truck.



Probably a Movie About Strippers

SDU: Sex Duties Unit (Hong Kong)

Because we really hope it's not a movie about actual police officers who have to knock on doors telling people they're investigating sex duties.

Greece's Faliro Partners With FilmNation

By Pamela McClintock

Glen Basner's FilmNation and Christos V. Konstantakopoulos' Athens-based Faliro House Productions are partnering on a two-year fund that will pay for the development of four to eight projects a year. The deal will allow FilmNation to expand its strategy of acquiring high-profile development properties, while broadening Faliro House's slate with a number of marquee titles for the international marketplace.



Basner

Projects developed under the fund are intended to be financed with FilmNation's existing credit facility, allowing the production, sales and financing company to continue to build its pipeline.

"It's an honor when a man like Glen Basner asks you to partner up," said Faliro president Konstantakopoulos. "This will greatly help our goals in Greece and abroad, and we very much look forward to working with Glen and all the wonderful citizens of FilmNation." **THR**



Infinitely Polar Bear

Don't Worry

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Westend: **Michael Winterbottom's** *The Face of an Angel* starring **Daniel Bruhl** and **Stephen Herek's** *The Great Gilly Hopkins* with **Glenn Close**.

"We're satisfied. It was a good market for us. We got everything we wanted from Berlin this year," says Concorde managing director **Markus Zimmer**.

Marketgoers cite several reasons for the slowdown, but they remain optimistic with Cannes approaching.

Says German buyer Telepool managing director **Thomas Weymar**: "But what's bad for Berlin is good for Cannes."

"It feels like buyers are con-

fused and waiting for Cannes. There weren't the big-ticket items like *Wolf of Wall Street*," adds veteran sales agent **Suzanna Kegeyan**, who heads up Synchronicity, a division of The Solution.

Weymar points to the fact that German TV is buying a lot fewer films because the TV market is at an extremely low level and it is not being compensated by growth in VOD. "So we are buying less and we have to buy more carefully," Weymar says.

Still some dealmakers are blunt about the quality of market titles. Says one top Europe-based buyer: "The quality of projects being offered at the EFM this year is the worst it's ever been." **THR**

Connolly

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

who find themselves vying for the same role.

His efforts paid off. In a boost for the film's financial profile, **Arianne Fraser's** Highland Film Group has sold the Atlas Independent movie in a number of key territories, including to Square One in Germany and Revolutionary in CIS and Eastern Europe, and is in final negotiations for Japan, France and Latin America, among other territories.

Connolly tells *The Hollywood Reporter* that being at a film market has been different from anything he has experienced professionally. "I can't wait to get home and tell my friends and family about it," Connolly says.

Fraser agrees that EFM has been an eye-opening experience for Connolly, but that his presence is incredibly valuable. "It is important for the distributors to hear from the director," she says.

The screenplay was written by **Bert V. Royal** (*Easy A*), and Connolly is set to begin shooting *Wright Girls* in May. **THR**

Jones

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

wraps the final season of *Mad Men*.

Mary Jane Skalski, who produced the acclaimed independent films *The Station Agent* and *The Visitor*, and **Damon Lane** and **John Santilli** are producing with **Lawrence Mattis** of Circle of Confusion, the company behind AMC's *The Walking Dead*.

Jones, who plays Betty Francis on *Mad Men*, also appeared in *X-Men: First Class* and with **Liam Neeson** in the Berlin-set *Unknown*. She is now shooting the thriller *Good Kill* directed by New Zealand-born helmer **Andrew Niccol** (*In Time*). The film looks at the hot-button issue of drone warfare and focuses on a decent family man who begins to question the ethics of his job as a drone pilot who, from the comfort of the United States, pilots the machines that fire missiles on targets thousands of miles away.

Jones is repped by UTA, Mosaic and Jackoway Tyerman. **THR**

SMALLER DISTRIBS THRIVE

By Rebecca Ford

When it comes to American buyers, the big players certainly made noise, notably The Weinstein Co. (*The Imitation Game*), TWC's Radius (*Paradise Lost*, *Everly*) and Sony Pictures Classics (*Aloft*), but the market has been a much livelier place for the more boutique distributors who have been on the hunt for new product for North America. "A lot of the smaller companies that are nibbling around the periphery of the market can feast on a good meal here," says Kino Lorber CEO **Richard Lorber**. Ten who fared well:

- Kino Lorber nabbed Sundance-winning pic *52 Tuesdays* from Visit Films
- Film Movement acquired Sundance Grand Jury prize-winner *To Kill a Man*
- Amplify picked up another Sundance rollover, *God Help the Girl*
- DraftHouse Films grappled docufiction pic *20,000 Days on Earth* from Hanway Films.
- Strand Releasing took horror thriller *The Strange Color of Your Body's Tears*.
- IFC Films grabbed *Gallows Hill*, for North America.
- Vertical Entertainment took holiday horror film *Torment*, sold by Filmax Intl.
- ARC Entertainment got North American rights to drama *Lullaby*.
- Zeitgeist Films acquired India-set drama *Siddharth* from Fortissimo Films
- Wrekin Hill Entertainment took 3D animated film *Yellowbird* from TeamTO and Haut & Court **THR**



52 Tuesdays

PROMOTION

NOW AVAILABLE ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD

Download the THR App for iPad® Edition today thr.com/iPad

THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER EDITION FOR iPad®

The weekly magazine content you love, designed and enhanced for an interactive iPad® experience



- EXCLUSIVE BONUS CONTENT
- UPGRADED IN-APP BREAKING NEWS FEED
- CUSTOM INTERACTIVE FEATURES

FREE TO PRINT SUBSCRIBERS

Special introductory offers available.



iPad is a trademark of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. App Store is a service mark of Apple Inc.

THE
Hollywood
REPORTER

CEO, RAT PACK FILMPRODUKTION

Christian Becker

The German producer on the origins of his company name, making crowdpleasers and why he owes his career to *Magnum P.I.* By Scott Roxborough

MODEST, POLITE AND ENDLESSLY enthusiastic, Christian Becker might not fit the standard mold of the industry power player. But the 41-year-old head of Munich-based Rat Pack Filmproduktion can justifiably lay claim to being Germany's No. 1 producer. His company — together with parent group Constantin Film — has delivered the most commercially successful films of the past decade in Germany. From teen drama *The Wave* and kids adventure *Vicky the Viking* to politically incorrect comedies *Turkish for Beginners* and *The Wixxer*, Becker and Rat Pack have wowed at the box office and left an indelible mark on local pop culture. The company's latest — the high-school comedy *Suck Me Shakespeare* — has grossed nearly \$70 million in Germany since its November opening (it's still in the top 10) and recently was picked up for world sales by Picture Tree International, which has been presenting the title to buyers at EFM. *The Hollywood Reporter* caught up with Becker to talk movies, the virtues of mainstream entertainment and how he got his start (hint: *THR* played a key role).

You have a personal connection to *The Hollywood Reporter* that goes way back.

Yeah, it was thanks to *THR* that I got into film. When I graduated from high school, I went to America to celebrate. In L.A. I saw *The Hollywood Reporter* on a newsstand. There was a coupon inside for 52 issues of the international edition. It was incredibly expensive back then — like \$3,000, \$4,000 a year. But I got a subscription. I took a job at the post office to pay for it. I was doing business studies and every day I read *The Hollywood Reporter*. One day I read that Reuben Leder — who wrote and produced *Magnum P.I.*, one of my favorite TV shows — was coming to Berlin to produce a show called *Berlin Break*. I called around and got ahold of the production company. I convinced them to give me a six-week unpaid internship. Those six weeks became a year and from there I went from film to film to film. I was on my way.

Why did you name your company Rat Pack?

I've always been a huge fan of the Rat Pack — the original with Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr. and Dean Martin. I loved the idea of a group of friends that had fun together, went



"We make movies to please the fans, not the critics," says Becker, photographed Feb. 5 in his Munich office. "If I go into a screening of one of our movies and 800 kids are screaming and laughing their heads off, that's the best."

out and partied and made music or movies together. That's what I wanted in my company: a big family of directors and authors, all friends and all making films together. It's also about the kind of movies we make. Rat Pack is about entertainment. We don't focus so much on the serious dramas. Even a drama like *The Wave* is a mainstream commercial film. There are a lot of production companies in Germany that can do better serious films than we can. A film is an expensive proposition and I think you have a responsibility to entertain, if only to get your investors their money back.

Your films typically don't screen in Berlin. What do you use the festival and the market for?

It used to be I'd watch lots of movies — fantastic films I'd never seen before and probably would never see again. But the film market has become so big in the last few years that I spend the Berlinale doing meetings every half hour. If it's with Americans, it's every 15 minutes.

Rat Pack's comedy *Suck Me Shakespeare* has made some \$70 million so far. When did you know it was going to be big?

It was a very special product. The credit has to go to Martin Moszkowicz, the CEO of [Rat Pack parent company] Constantin Film. He was the one who discovered [*Suck Me Shakespeare* writer-director] Bora Dagtekin and signed him to an exclusive contract with the Constantin Group. When he made his first film — [2012's] *Turkish for Beginners* — he could pick a company in the Constantin Group and he picked us. Lena Schomann was the producer who really worked with Dagtekin on set. My role was minor compared to Bora, Martin and Lena. But I thought the script to *Shakespeare* was hilarious. We have this tradition of German school comedies but it's been a long time since we had one. When I saw the rough cut, I knew it was going to sell at least 3 million tickets [*Shakespeare* now is

closing in on 7 million]. It's not just that it's funny. It's got a lot of heart.

Is it harder to make your sort of mainstream films in Germany, which lacks a real star system?

Yeah. We really only have four stars — that is four actors who can guarantee an opening weekend. They are Til Schweiger, Matthias Schweighöfer, [*Shakespeare* star] Elyas M'Barek and Michael Bully Herbig. If you don't have one of those four, it's tight. We are constantly having to reinvent ourselves.

You are moving into English-language films with the adaptation of the kids book *Jim Button* and the thriller *The Jesus Video*. Why?

It's something extra we've added, but it's not going to be our main focus. We aren't going to make the mistake of just doing English-language movies. We'll maybe make [one] every two to three years. Our focus is still the German market. But we are well along on both *Jim Button* and *The Jesus Video*. Andrew Birkin [*The Cement Garden*] has written a perfect script for *Jim Button* and we're going into the international financing stage now. The book is the most successful, still-unfilmed kids brand in Germany. It's from Michael Ende, who wrote *The Neverending Story*. A recent poll showed more Germans know Jim Button than Chancellor Angela Merkel.

You're famous for watching everything, from trash to art house. Is that true?

Yes, I still do that. From the new Jean Claude Van Damme to *Rust and Bone* or *Ang Bak 3*. At home the DVDs are piled up to the ceiling. When I visit film schools, the students often say, "I don't like trash movies" or "I don't like Hollywood" or "I don't like German films," but you should watch everything because you never know where an idea — a camera technique, a way of telling a story — can come from. You can learn from all of them. **THR**

PROMOTION

SEE & BE SEEN

Daily, breaking news and reviews from the front lines at all major international film festivals

FILMART

HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL & TV MARKET
March 18-21, 2014

FESTIVAL DE CANNES

May 14-25, 2014

TORONTO

INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
September 5-15, 2014

BUSAN

INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
October 2-11, 2014

AFM

AMERICAN FILM MARKET
November 5-12, 2014

THR's dedicated coverage at each includes:

PREVIEW ISSUE | FILM FESTIVAL AND MARKET DAILIES | THR.COM | MOBILE | EVENTS



THE
Hollywood
REPORTER

Contact: EUROPE & AFRICA Alison Smith | alison.smith@thr.com // Tommaso Campione | tommaso.campione@thr.com
UNITED STATES | Debra Fink | debra.fink@thr.com // ASIA | Ivy Lam | ivy.lam@thr.com
AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND | Lisa Cruse | lisa@spiritedmedia.co.nz

About Town



1 Musician Nick Cave was flanked by his 20,000 *Days on Earth* co-directors Iain Forsyth and Jane Pollard at the film's Feb. 10 photo call. The Panorama Dokumente entry won Forsyth and Pollard a directing award at the Sundance Film Festival in January.

2 Co-stars Pierce Brosnan and Toni Collette posed before the Berlinale Special Gala for their dark comedy *A Long Way Down*.

3 *Long Way Down*'s Aaron Paul, who plays a suicidal pizza delivery boy in the film, took photos with fans. As to his role in the highly anticipated prequel to AMC's *Breaking Bad*, Paul said, "I'm really hoping to be a part of it, but I can't confirm anything yet."

4 French actors Caroline Silhol and Hippolyte Girardot attended the photo call for their film *Life of Riley* on Feb. 10.

5 From left: Austrian actor Tobias Moretti (left) joined his *The Dark Valley* co-stars Paula Beer of Germany and British actor Sam Riley at the premiere of their period drama.

6 "Lars kept saying I was overacting, but that's nothing new," said *Nymphomaniac*'s Uma Thurman of her director von Trier. On Feb. 10, she attended the Cinema for Peace fundraising gala.

7 *Nymphomaniac*'s Christian Slater hit the carpet for his film's screening Feb. 9.

THE DEFINITIVE VOICE OF *ENTERTAINMENT NEWS*

VISIT THR'S BOOTH
FOR AN EXCLUSIVE
SUBSCRIPTION OFFER!



The *Berlinale* Actors



Roundtable

Six thespians on what drives them, the pros and cons of stage fright and the challenge of deciphering script directions (“The pterodactyl retreats.” How do you play that?)

BY SCOTT ROXBOROUGH AND STUART KEMP PHOTOGRAPHED BY FABRIZIO MALTESE



“[Acting] is a funny job because there is so much time when you aren’t doing it. Whether you are allowed to say ‘I’m an actor’ when you are between jobs is the question,” says George Mackay (second from left). He was photographed with (from left) Greta Gerwig, Ken Duken, Diane Kruger, Sam Riley and Michelle Yeoh on Feb. 9 at the Audi Lounge on Marlene-Dietrich Platz.

S

IX ACCLAIMED ACTORS from three continents sat down to discuss their often frustrating, usually frightening and sometimes joyful craft from a perch in the Audi Lounge above the Berlinale red carpet. German actress Diane Kruger, 37, whose latest, *The Better Angels*, is in Berlin's Panorama Special sidebar; Asian superstar Michelle Yeoh, 51, a former Bond girl and producer and star of Culinary Cinema entry *Final Recipe*; and jury member Greta Gerwig, 30

(whose *Frances Ha* was in the Panorama section at last year's festival), all have struggled to break out of the confines placed on them by a male-dominated industry. German star Ken Duken, 34, and England-born Berlinale Shooting Star George MacKay, 20, who have *Northmen — A Viking Saga* and *Pride*, respectively, being touted at the EFM, and Sam Riley, the 34-year-old British star of *The Dark Valley*, a Berlinale Special screening pic, talked of fighting for roles and the fear of never working again. The six performers shared the horrors and joys of self-taping auditions, how anxiety feeds fine performances and why no one can plan a successful career.

When did you first think of yourself as an actor?

SAM RILEY It comes and goes. Quite often I still don't think I am. Then there are moments when you allow yourself to think you are. A lot of actors still feel like they're blagging [faking] it.

DIANE KRUGER I feel like I've always been an actress. Even when I was little, I pretended to be someone I was not. I've always told a good story to amuse people, to get what I wanted. Maybe it's called being a liar. (Laughs.)

RILEY I think my family would say that too, that I was always an actor. Because I was always playing. But I took these games much more seriously than the others.

KEN DUKEN I grew up in the makeup chair with my mother. She's a stage actress. So I grew up onstage and never thought about doing anything else. But it's like a ping-pong rhythm where you feel comfortable with what you do and then you doubt it all.

GRETA GERWIG I felt it when I didn't need a day job anymore because when people asked me what I did, and I

said, "Actually I'm an actor," they would say, "What do you really do?" Well I'm not a waitress anymore; I may be again, but right now I'm an actor.

MICHELLE YEOH I'm still wondering. I guess I don't put a name to what I do. I'm very blessed. I love what I'm doing, but I never thought I would be an actress. I loved movies as a kid, but my mom would have been the actress. I was a dancer. But I got terrible stage fright.

GEORGE MACKAY It's a funny job because there is so much time when you aren't doing it. Whether you are allowed to say "I'm an actor" when you are between jobs and trying to get a part is the question.

KRUGER In America they use the word talent a lot. They go, "The talent is moving." "The talent is going to stage one." It's weird.

DUKEN In some ways it's a lottery. Because I have so many friends who are incredible actors and they never get even one chance to show what they can do.

YEOH You have to be ready. If you are given the opportunity



"I would cut my left leg off for Quentin because he made me feel like I was everything he had hoped for and more in that part."

KRUGER, on her *Inglourious Basterds* director Tarantino

you have to take it or it can slip through your fingers. The harder you work the luckier you become.

What's been the best or worst piece of advice you've ever been given?

KRUGER "Just be yourself." What the f— does that mean?

YEOH "Show your best side." What is that?

RILEY I can't remember any [good advice].

YEOH Oh dear, that can't be good.

RILEY I auditioned for the big five English drama schools but didn't get in, and a teacher at the time said to give up. I did stop doing it for five years. I wanted to be a rock star. But we lost our record contract pretty quickly and I called my agent that I had told I was going to be a rock star and weirdly, she said, "They're looking for someone to play the singer of Joy Division in Manchester" [for the film *Control*]. I was working in a warehouse then. I told the people at the warehouse I was going to the dentist and went to the audition. I got the job and I've been an actor since then.

MACKAY I auditioned [for drama school] and didn't get in either.

GERWIG The best advice I think is that work begets work. You just have to believe and say, "I'm just going to try and do this."

MACKAY So many good things happen by chance and are unplotable.

DUKEN Yes, strategy can be an enemy. Fifteen years ago, I had been in the job three years and I got this offer to be in an international production. To play the Nazi. You know, every good German actor, you get that offer.

KRUGER We all get it once!

RILEY Did you do the job?

DUKEN I did the job and when I was preparing, my mother gave me some good advice. She said, "That's bullshit — you are playing him like a bad guy. He thinks, when he's doing these things, that he's the good guy." It was the best advice ever. I played the character in this way. And this job led to a role playing a Jew who saved 50 children from the Nazis. The director told me, "I didn't like it that I liked you as the bad guy. So now you are going to be the good guy." Sometimes it's just like that in this job. Strategy would have been my enemy.

Have you ever fought for a role?

KRUGER Ever? Always.

GERWIG It's actually weird if something is offered to you — you wonder what's wrong with it.

YEOH In Asia, in Hong Kong in the old days we didn't audition for parts. So going to America for the first time and auditioning was scary.

DUKEN Sometimes [casting] is a really mean process. I think I fight for every role.

RILEY Do you guys ever have to self-tape?

KRUGER I prefer that.

GERWIG I don't like it.

RILEY I do them with my wife [German actress Alexandra Maria Lara]. I've been James Bond twice. But behind the camera. It's still exciting.

Diane, why do you prefer self-taping?

KRUGER You're in control. You're in a communal environment and a safe and friendly one. But you are always asked to play the big emotional scenes. The crying scene. I don't



GERWIG



DUKEN

know why they always ask you to do that scene.

MACKAY You never get the kissing scene for a self-tape.

GERWIG I got one where the direction was “the pterodactyl retreats.” I mean how do you play that?

KRUGER There’s this thing in America where they release audition tapes. It’s such a violation.

What are you most afraid of?

RILEY Not getting work. That it suddenly comes to an end and I don’t get work anymore. I’ve just become a father so I am wondering if that will make things change.

DUKEN I am very different because when everything is bad I am very comfortable with it. I have a lot of fears — I would be lying if I said I didn’t — but it’s OK to have them.

Michelle, what about you? Do you still have fears?

YEOH Nowadays? Not really. I’ve gone past that. I’ve jumped on a moving train, I’ve done crazy things, so I’m not afraid anymore. ... We are in a job that is continually frustrating. There are no guarantees. We can only play a part, we can only do the best we can. It’s like when you do a stunt. If you are scared, get off the platform, because you are going to get yourself killed.

How do you work with directors?

Any horror stories?

MACKAY I don’t really have any, maybe because I’m just starting out. At the moment I’m really just enjoying the closeness you can get with a director. Enjoying that the opinion is a good thing if it’s valid. Being comfortable with saying, “This is my one shot at this one bit, can we at least try it my way once?”

KRUGER I agree with you and that’s an ideal situation. I think in my experience one of the biggest challenges is adapting to different directors because they are all different. And I found that I personally like a director who really directs. Who I feel has a very strong vision of what he wants to make and who will guide me so I become the embodiment of his vision while bringing myself to the role. But I’ve also worked with directors who were hired by a studio and are basically technicians and they shoot every angle and they have no point of view. And then I’ve worked with directors I’ve found very manipulating and very difficult, on a human level, to deal with. Where you come home crying. Because you can see they are using you to get a reaction out of you.

Which kind is Quentin Tarantino?

KRUGER Well, he will break a scene if you forget a word. But I love that because I know what to expect. The hard part is to get the job, but once you get the job he will literally give you wings to fly. I would cut my left leg off for Quentin because he made me feel like I was everything he had hoped for and more in that part [in *Inglourious Basterds*]. It’s funny, we had dinner last week and he said, “I felt like

you were scared of me in rehearsal,” and I’m like, “I’m still scared of you.”

DUKEN He’s Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

RILEY My wife has had horrific bullies working with her sometimes from a young age and has come home crying. I’ve seen that on set directors can be very different in how they talk with men and women.

KRUGER I find that super frustrating. Especially on big movies. The male character is always cast first and when he has an opinion, he’s a great artist. But as a woman, you’re being difficult: “Oh that f—ing actress!”

Do you still come home in tears?

KRUGER I don’t anymore. One of the best pieces of advice I’ve ever been given was from Ed Harris, who said, “Stop being scared of being scared.” It used to freeze me if I had a big personality in front of me or an actor who was really overpowering; you get so intimidated. I would get so scared. But only you know what you are capable of and with experience I know what I can do.

Greta, did your relationship to acting change when you wrote your own script for *Frances Ha*?

GERWIG It’s difficult because I love working on something that came from someone else’s mind, but I find that the writing I’ve done with other partners has been, well, better parts. After [director and co-writer Noah Baumbach and I] finished writing *Frances Ha*, I had a moment where I was proud of a piece of writing and thought, “I don’t want to take the part.” Because maybe there was a better actress to play the part and because if I played the part I was afraid people wouldn’t believe that I wrote it.

YEOH Really?

GERWIG I’ve had lots of journalists ask me — and it’s just slightly patronizing — “So you helped write the script?” No, I co-wrote the script. “So you wrote your part?” No, I wrote the script.

DUKEN [On one project] I think the actors didn’t say one word that was in that script and then the film won an





YEOH

"There are no guarantees. We can only play a part, we can only do the best we can. It's like when you do a stunt. If you are scared, get off the platform, because you are going to get yourself killed."

YEOH

She was always very scared before a play. And a young actress asked her, "You've done this for 60 years, but you are still so scared before every performance." And the old actress said, "Honey, stage fright comes with talent. Good luck."

What has been your most positive experience as an actor, where you think, "This is why I'm an actor"?

KRUGER Every day on set. Every single day.

YEOH Exactly.

KRUGER You hear 98 percent no and then you hear yes. It's such a high. You don't need drugs for that. You get to do what you love. There's nothing better.

DUKEN I think so too, but I often think, "Is there a stranger way to make a living?" I remember a friend asking me, "When's the last time you did something stupid?" And I said, "I just spent the whole day lying in a trunk with a dead goat."

GERWIG When the movie that I "helped write," *Frances Ha*, premiered in Telluride, it was my peak moment, my peak fear and my peak joy. No one had seen it and I've never felt so vulnerable. I had never worked on anything harder. It was a couple of years of writing and making the movie. I threw up before the screening. But then when they applauded at the end I was weeping.

RILEY When my first film [2007's *Control*] premiered in Cannes, I was standing on the roof wearing a suit that someone had just given me that I would never have been able to afford. And I looked down and they were queuing around the block. I was 26 and I had had so many downers career-wise before that. And afterwards, when they clapped, I thought, "It's probably not going to get much better than this." And it was my first film.

DUKEN You get so many surprising gifts from the people you are working with. I sometimes think we shouldn't be called actors. We are reactors. When you start playing with someone and something happens, it becomes magical. It's something you will never forget. Or just sit there on set and a friend of yours just nails a scene. You get goosebumps. There are so many amazing things in this job that the side effects, the things that are not that great, they are easily forgotten. **THR**

award for best screenplay.

YEOH Wow. In America, they are such sticklers for saying exactly what is on the paper, with every um and ah.

DUKEN (to Yeoh) You said, if you are scared of the stunt, get off. I think I'm completely different. If I'm not scared, I don't want to do it. I'm driven by fear. I was like this in snowboarding. I grew up in the mountains and I was insane on the snowboard. And every time I thought, "It's OK," I broke something. Every time. And every time I was f—ing scared, I nailed it.

MACKAY I'm doing my first play at the moment, *The Cement Garden*. I start out up on stage, as the audience is coming in, just reading a comic. It's really weird because you can feel the people coming in. It is so hard to keep the comic from shaking.

DUKEN There's a beautiful story about a very old actress.

REVIEWS

IN COMPETITION



Skarsgård (right) takes a break from beating up Hivju.

In Order of Disappearance

A rip-roaring revenge tale heats up the frozen North BY DAVID ROONEY

THERE HASN'T BEEN THIS MUCH BLOOD SPILLED WITH this much droll dark humor in a frigid, snowbound landscape since the Coen Brothers fed a hapless Steve Buscemi into a wood chipper in *Fargo*. A vigorously plotted revenge saga about an aggrieved father who almost singlehandedly turns the icy mountainsides and fjords of small-town Norway into a criminal graveyard, *In Order of Disappearance* provides a wonderful opportunity for Stellan Skarsgård to purvey his stone-faced gravitas and calm intelligence. It also marks a cracking new chapter in the actor's collaboration with director Hans Petter Moland, which began in 1995 with *Zero Kelvin*.

Already a brisk seller to international markets, the superbly directed film seems a safe bet to be snapped up for U.S. distribution, and a deal for remake rights surely won't be far behind. While it's being somewhat reductively billed as an "action comedy," this is actually a much more subtle mix of contrasting tones, shifting fluidly

of man Nils is. He encounters his son's terrified friend Finn (Tobias Santelmann), whose stupidity led to the killing, and gets the name of Finn's drug contact. Nils soon establishes a trail leading all the way to Greven, known as "The Count" (Pal Sverre Hagen). The oily criminal scion has been peaceably splitting territories with the Serbian Mafia, led by Papa (Bruno Ganz). But when disappearances start mounting up, with blame being wrongly attributed, a crime war ignites.

Moland's tongue is planted firmly in his cheek, as demonstrated by the death notices that punctuate the action, with a black screen bearing the deceased's birth name, crime alias and a symbol denoting religion — chiefly Christian or Serbian Orthodox, but with the odd Jew or atheist thrown in. But there's a transfixing solemnity underlying the black comedy. That makes it far more compelling than just another assembly line of murder en route to an inevitable final showdown.

Those formulaic elements are here, make no mistake, but the wit of the screenplay and the actors' characterizations ensure that it's highly

from devastating family tragedy to pitiless violence to sharp observational and social humor, all wrapped up in a vivid sense of place. A very cold place.

Skarsgård is Nils Dickman, a Swedish transplant whom we first meet as he's being honored as Citizen of the Year. In his acceptance speech he talks with humility of being a pathfinder, clearing a way through the wilderness for his townsfolk via his job driving a massive snow-blower truck. Nils' path takes a detour when his son turns up dead, shot full of heroin. Cops write it off as another case of "young people destroying themselves," but Nils is convinced his son was no junkie.

Moland and screenwriter Kim Fupz Aakeson immediately let us know we're in capable hands with the crisp economy of this setup, and Skarsgård is no less precise in showing us exactly what kind

DIRECTOR Q&A

Hans Petter Moland

The Norwegian director of *In Order of Disappearance* talks revenge, justice and Stellan Skarsgård BY SCOTT ROXBOROUGH

Norwegian helmer Hans Petter Moland is a Berlinale veteran. His latest, the crime comedy *In Order of Disappearance*, is his third film to compete for Berlin's Golden Bear. Moland was last here in 2010 with *A Somewhat Gentle Man*, a hit that won the audience

prize awarded by readers of Berlin's *Morgenpost* newspaper.

How did the idea for this film come about?

I think it started out by toying with the idea of what happens to presumably civilized human beings when they



are confronted with something so unjust and so brutal that the primitive impulses of revenge kick in. This is the departure point. I am curious about that porous line in our psyche when we give way to our instincts.

In Order of Disappearance is a revenge tale, a theme touched on in *A Somewhat Gentle Man*.

I think [*Disappearance*] is the opposite of *A Somewhat Gentle Man* because [the latter film is] about a man who everyone wants to take revenge but he refuses. He does everything to avoid going down that path to revenge demanded of him. The difference is that he is a man who has been steeped in crime his whole life who is reevaluating his life, while [*Disappearance*] is about a man who is a model citizen. He's not just a model

entertaining, giving the film a distinctive personality.

The Count is the epitome of pretentious Eurotrash with his skinny suits, topknot and vegan diet. He's ruthless but also given to petulance, particularly when clashing with his hostile ex-wife (Birgitte Hjort Sorensen) over custody issues. The character borders on caricature but for the most part deliciously so. As Greven's gloomy Serbian counterpart, Ganz is a whole other breed of old-school gangster, though no less amusing, his voice such a hoarse rasp he sometimes requires an interpreter.

The film sacrifices some of its tautness as all the various threats converge, and could perhaps stand to be tightened by 10 minutes or so. Also, the women characters are not given enough of a stake. But since much is made of Nils' surname and related ideas of masculinity, fatherhood and fraternal codes, it might have been unrealistic to expect otherwise. None of their roles are exactly substantial, but there are rich character nuances among the goons on both sides (the stupendously bearded Kristofer Hivju from *Game of Thrones* among them), and an interesting addition in Nils' estranged brother (Peter Andersson), whose shady past comes into play.

Running through the script are some very funny exchanges — among cops, drug thugs, regular townsfolk — that poke wry fun at the insular nature of life in the snowy sticks, attitudes toward foreigners, and the virtues of the Scandinavian welfare state. Nowhere is this more hilarious than when a Central European career criminal marvels at the comforts of a Norwegian prison: good meals, dental coverage, pension contributions for work, pleasant guards and no rape!

Binding all this together is Skarsgard's rivetingly contained performance as a quiet man pushed to extremes by his almost biblical sense of justice and retribution. "A father must avenge his son," he says with deadly seriousness. But Nils also shows compassion in his paternal scenes with Greven's young son. Unlike many films in which good men are driven by violence against their children to take brutal measures, Nils has set himself a task, and he performs it with methodical focus and minimal burdened glowering (see Hugh Jackman, *Prisoners*).

The film looks aces, with Philip Ogaard's unfussy camerawork letting the imposing landscape speak for itself. The score by Kaspar Kaae and Kare Vestrheim effectively uses acoustic guitar elements to lend the faintest suggestion of a Western flavor to the action.

Competition

Cast Stellan Skarsgard, Bruno Ganz, Pal Sverre Hagen

Director Hans Petter Moland // 117 minutes

citizen in the sense of adhering to the proper codes and laws — he has a passion and a mission in life. He has something invested in the contract we have with society in abstaining from vigilantism. In Norway, in particular, our contract with the society at large is very uniform. We have a belief that investing in the greater good comes back to us.

This is your fourth film with Stellan Skarsgard. What is he like to work with?

He is an extremely generous human

being. He is generous with his other actors, he is generous with the crew around him and with his directors. He is not a silly man. He is somebody who likes to be around people who are nice, and nice to each other. People who are professional and do a good job but who have a collective instinct. It makes it a lot more fun to work with him. It creates a feeling that we are doing this to make something good. He is smart enough to know it is better to be in a film where everyone is good than to be the only one to shine in a pile of shit. **VIR**

From left: Mortensen, Isaac and Dunst are on the run in Greece.



The Two Faces of January

Screenwriter Hossein Amini makes a strong directing bow with a psychological thriller adapted from Patricia Highsmith BY DEBORAH YOUNG

Who can say no to a good Patricia Highsmith adaptation? Though her 1964 suspense thriller *The Two Faces of January* is not the easiest story to bring to the screen, its atmosphere is contagious, even if a lot of the dash is missing. Since the film is entirely built around a trio of greedy, lying, vapid losers, it's unlikely that the directing debut of screenwriter Hossein Amini (*Drive*) is going to knock *The Talented Mr. Ripley* from its pedestal in the Highsmith pantheon, or even jar it slightly. Still, the production is truly lush and the actors — Viggo Mortensen, Oscar Isaac and Kirsten Dunst — almost too subtle and nuanced for the roles they play.

The story opens in 1962 Athens at the Parthenon. Rydal (Isaac), a good-looking American expat, is playing tour guide to a group of breathless college girls while portentously talking about "the cruel tricks gods play on men," when a swanky American couple catches his eye.

Chester McFarland (Mortensen) is not easy to warm up to at first glance. Much older than his pretty wife, Colette (Dunst), there's a shrewdness about him that allows him to size Rydal up on the spot, as the boy brazenly shortchanges one of the girls on his tour. Rydal tells the couple he's a Yale grad who's in Europe while he tries to figure

out what he wants to do in life. Chester says he's an investment broker and hires the boy to take them around. Neither one seems particularly trustworthy.

Over dinner, Rydal can't take his eyes off Colette, though his own date (Daisy Bevan) seems equally worthy of attention, not to mention rich and available. Since the underground Colette-Rydal attraction is so crucial to the plot, it would have behooved everyone to work on a little chemistry.

In addition to jealousy, Chester has new problems to deal with when a private eye sent by the mob tracks him down just as he and Colette are tucking into bed. By the next scene Chester is dragging his unconscious nemesis down the hall back to his own room. Rydal appears at the wrong moment and is forced to help him, not realizing the trouble he's getting into.

Sensing easy money to be made, Rydal whisks the couple into hiding on the island of Crete. Suffice it to say things go from bad to much worse.

The film's major plus is its exotic atmosphere of time and place. But compared to the fantasy Italy of *Ripley*, the joie de vivre is largely missing.

Berlinale Special

Cast Viggo Mortensen, Kirsten Dunst, Oscar Isaac

Director Hossein Amini
96 minutes

IN COMPETITION



Silhol tolerates wayward spouse Vuillermoz.

Life of Riley

Alain Resnais' latest is an overtly theatrical effort about the quotidian deceptions of suburban couples BY JORDAN MINTZER

Still at it at 91, French auteur Alain Resnais (*Hiroshima Mon Amour*) offers up another outrageously artificial piece of filmed theater with *Life of Riley*, his third adaptation of a work by British playwright Alan Ayckbourn.

Similar to both *Smoking/No Smoking* (1993) and *Private Fears in Public Places* (2006) in its use of stagy sets, affected performances and surrealistic touches — in this case, inserts of drawings by French comic-

book artist Blutch and random appearances by a snickering mole puppet — this joyous yet melancholic effort once again charts the woes of middle-class couples, though it manages to do so with a bit of a smile. Still, its overtly theatrical style will turn off most viewers beyond the director's faithful few, while a cast that includes Sandrine Kiberlain and Hippolyte Girardot should attract modest crowds when *Riley* hits France in late March.

The film follows three sets of partners living not-so-happily in the Yorkshire countryside. Things get worse when their friend George Riley — whom we neither see nor hear — is diagnosed with terminal cancer. On one end there's the quibbling doctor, Colin (Girardot), and his desperate housewife, Kathryn (Sabine Azema), who calls her hubby out for every false move while trying to conceal a burgeoning whisky habit. On the other there's two-timer Jack (Michel Vuillermoz) and his spouse, Tamara (Caroline Silhol), who tolerates her husband's infidelities as long as he hides them well (which he doesn't). Somewhere in between is Monica (Kiberlain), the recently separated wife of Riley who has since shackled up with a jealous farmer (Andre Dussollier).

When news of Riley's sickness hits, Jack is the most affected, while Kathryn and Tamara decide to invite the dying man to act in a play they're putting on at a local theater. It soon becomes clear that Riley's life is less hopeless than we thought, especially as he seems to be attracting undue attention from all three women,

whose men slowly learn that their friend may be having a grand ol' time behind their backs.

The performances are purposely mannered, with the actors indulging in the play's witty banter while announcing the dialogue a vive voix. (This is especially true of Azema, who's explosively chirpy as the boozing Kathryn; Kiberlain is strongest as a woman caught between new and old loves.) Such a style can be off-putting for viewers used to naturalistic acting, while others may be wondering what the heck all these Frenchies are doing in York in the first place.

But Resnais, who began by making experimental documentaries in the 1940s and now, nearly 70 years later, has embraced filmed-theater as perhaps his most experimental mode yet, seems determined to carry the drama's artifice to its upmost extremes, constantly exposing the fraud that lies behind classic narrative structures.

Competition

Cast Sabine Azema, Hippolyte Girardot, Caroline Silhol

Director Alain Resnais
107 minutes

Inbetween Worlds

The German army in Afghanistan is the curiosity item in a familiar drama

BY DEBORAH YOUNG

Anyone who believes Western military intervention in Afghanistan is a huge waste of time and lives probably will have their opinion confirmed by *Inbetween Worlds*, a beautifully shot art house film that takes the viewer behind the scenes of a German Army unit defending a village from Taliban attacks. Another viewer could argue that director Feo Aladag shows precisely the opposite: the urgent need for Western and Afghani cooperation to win conflict, at a time when German troops are preparing to withdraw from the country after more than a decade. These multiple viewpoints are inevitable for a film that dilutes its strength by switching back and forth from Germans to Afghanis, leaving the drama in no man's land.

Still, audiences in Germany, where the film is coming out after its bow in Berlin competition, and other territories are bound to appreciate the realism and muscular shooting by a woman director and crew (shades of

Kathryn Bigelow and *Zero Dark Thirty*) on location in northern Afghanistan. It comes as a bit of a shock to see fully armed Germans in military uniforms again, after playing the villains in hundreds of Third Reich films. Here they are obviously the heroes, and in some way reflect Aladag's plucky courage in producing the film on her own under such dangerous circumstances.

The title says it all about the culture



Zehrfeld (left) and Ahmady find common ground.

clash she portrays. Teacher Tarik (Mohsin Ahmady) lives alone with his sister (Saida Barmaki) after their father's death. When he gets a job as an interpreter for Capt. Jesper (Ronald Zehrfeld), he's viewed as a traitor by the Taliban and both are put in danger.

Jesper initially has a hard time dealing with the leader of the local Arbaki resistance, Haroon (Abdul Salam Yosofzai), but they slowly come to respect each other. The narrative arc is a familiar one and holds precious few surprises. However, the immediacy and tension with which Aladag conveys the daily life of the soldiers is something to take home, and all the soldiers seem unusually vulnerable for a war film.

Judith Kaufmann's spacious and gorgeous cinematography is a feast of muted sand colors complemented by the costumes and uniforms, creating one of the most expressive visuals of any film from the region.

Competition

Cast Ronald Zehrfeld, Mohsin Ahmady, Saida Barmaki, Abdul Salam Yosofzai, Burghart Klaussner

Director Feo Aladag
102 minutes



Persbrandt (right) and his producer Trine Dyrholm make music.

Someone You Love

This familiar tune is carried along by solid performances

BY JORDAN MINTZER

The shadow of Leonard Cohen looms large over *Someone You Love*, an endearing if somewhat conventional family drama from Danish writer-director Pernille Fischer Christensen (whose 2005 debut, *A Soap*, nabbed Berlin's Silver Bear prize).

Featuring *The Hobbit*'s Mikael Persbrandt as an aging, Cohen-like musician whose swooning guttural ballads cannot compensate for his lack of real affection and promising newcomer Sofus Ronnov as the grandson who may finally change the rocker's ways, this well-acted if predictable story should see theatrical engagements in Scandinavia and parts of Europe, with offshore VOD play and additional fest bids following a world premiere in the Berlinale Special Gala.

With his black coat and hat, slicked gray hair and gravelly performances backed by a chorus of female singers, sixtysomething Thomas Jacob (Persbrandt) is pretty much a dead-ringer for the Canadian singer-songwriter, save for the fact that he's a Dane who's been living in L.A. for decades and finally is returning to his homeland.

But what's supposed to be a fairly relaxed sojourn quickly turns sour when Thomas' daughter, Julie (Brigitte Hjort Sorensen) is forced into rehab for a coke habit, leaving dad to take care of her teenage boy, Noa (Ronnov), who hardly knows his grandfather at all.

If the scenario — written by Christensen and regular co-scribe Kim Fupz Aakeson — isn't all that original, the director gets much mileage out of the downcast yet touching Thomas character, who tries as hard as he can to avoid connecting with Noah. The film's strongest scenes show the bulky, tattooed Persbrandt facing off against the doe-faced Ronnov, and the latter is especially memorable as a shell-shocked child forced to grow up way too fast.

Featuring music conceived by the filmmaker herself, *Someone You Love* is not exactly a singing melodrama à la *The Broken Circle Breakdown* (a hit at last year's Berlinale), although Persbrandt is granted ample time to showcase his low-pitched pipes. And while the songs he performs are all decent, the musical aspects of the plot tend to feel clichéd, with Thomas throwing fits in the studio and playing the all-around tortured artist, albeit with real reasons to be so.

Tech credits are polished, with DP Laust Trier Mork (*The Hunt*) capturing the gloomy snowscapes and austere decors of Thomas' temporary abode. Editing by Anne Osterud and Janus Billeskov Jansen keeps things hemmed in at a neat 95 minutes, avoiding the kind of overindulgence typical of such weighty material.

Berlinale Special Gala

Cast Mikael Persbrandt, Trine Dyrholm, Brigitte Hjort Sorensen

Director Pernille Fischer Christensen // 95 minutes

The Snow White Murder Case

An overly fussy but entirely watchable murder mystery for the Twitter age BY ELIZABETH KERR

The folks at Twitter won't be thrilled with being painted as accomplices in irresponsible reporting and trials by public opinion given their plunging stock prices, but *The Snow White Murder Case* aims, among other things, to be the *Network* of the social-media age. Based on the bestselling novel by Minato Kanae, *Snow White* packs a lot into its overstuffed frame but manages to weave a wholly contemporary mystery from ingrained concepts of female competition, the idea that the sum total of our experiences can be corrupted to fit a given narrative and, of course, that there are three sides to every story. Distributors that found success with *Confessions* and the recent spate of Japanese mystery adaptations (*Villain*, *Helpless*, *Suspect X*) likely will want to take a look at this, and the inclusion of Internet subject matter should give the film appeal across ultra-wired Asia.

The film begins with the brutal murder of beautiful cosmetics company worker Noriko (Nanao), found burnt to a crisp in a national park. With little to do other than food reviews for his blog, a part-time TV station staffer, Akahoshi (Ayano Go), takes it upon himself to investigate the crime (there are no police in *Snow White*) based on a tip from an old university friend, Risako (Renbutsu Misako), who worked with the victim. She points him toward the meek and unassuming Miki (Inoue Mao). Soon enough, he's poking around and stitching together a tale of jealousy and suppressed rage directed at a kind and popular woman. Fickle Tweepers and tabloid TV viewers pass judgment: Miki is guilty, at least for now.

But that's just the beginning. Initially *Snow White* looks to be perpetuating the kind of



MARKET TITLE

Meek Mao is accused of murder.

tired tropes regarding gender roles that need to end, but as Akahoshi digs deeper the film reveals itself to be making subtle jabs at the social constructs that pit women against each other. Emi (Ono Erena) is a stereotypical gossip, Satoshi (Kaneko Nobuaki) is the man Miki and Noriko compete for. As Noriko slowly is revealed as manipulative and bitchy for the fun of it, the film's other themes emerge. The thin veneer of truth in the high-speed social-media era is even more fragile than in the past, and our pasts, however innocent, can come back to haunt us with a little media creativity.

The Snow White Murder Case, for all its modernity, is far from cutting-edge cinema. Director Nakamura Yoshihiro keeps things at a Filmmaking 101 level — most likely because he has to. The constant Twitter feed graphics (and thus multiple subtitles for foreign prints) can be distracting. And some character motivations range from thin at best (fear of losing a job) to illogical at worst (agreeing to murder conspiracies to see a concert). It's the kind of backstory that works better on the page and its removal could streamline a film that already has a lot going on.

Sales Shochiku Co. Ltd

Cast Inoue Mao, Ayano Go, Nanao, Tanimura Mitsuki, Renbutsu Misako, Kaneko Nobuaki, Ono Erena

Director Nakamura Yoshihiro 126 minutes

8 Decades of *The Hollywood Reporter*

The most glamorous and memorable moments from a storied history



Loren at the festival's film ball in June 1954.

60 years ago, Sophia Loren brought *Neapolitan Carousel* to the Berlinale

WHEN ITALIAN film star Sophia Loren made her American debut in the 1950s, Hollywood saw the beginnings of an international icon. After launching her film career in Rome in 1950, Loren signed a five-picture deal with Paramount that secured her leading roles in 1958's *Houseboat* and *Desire Under the Elms*. Just four years later, she earned a best actress Oscar for Vittorio De Sica's *Two Women* (beating out Audrey Hepburn in *Breakfast at Tiffany's* and becoming the first of only eight actors to be rewarded by the Academy for a foreign-language performance). Loren first attended the Berlin Film Festival in 1954 to promote Italian comedy *Neapolitan Carousel*. Forty years later, she was recognized at the 1994 festival with an honorary Golden Bear for her lifetime achievements in film. "From my first conscious moment watching movies, she's always been the star," says John Davis, producer of the 1995 comedy *Grumpier Old Men* in which Loren, now 79, starred as femme fatale Maria Ragetti. "She's larger than life. She's Sophia Loren."

— MEENA JANG

Robert Wagner Joining Oscar-Winners Schell, Loren in DeSica Film

Rome. — Robert Wagner, who recently finished a starring role in Columbia's "The War Lover," has been set by director Vittorio De Sica and producer Carlo Ponti to co-star with current Oscar-winners Sophia Loren and Maximilian Schell, as well as a past Oscar-winner Fredric March, in Jean Paul Sartre's "Prisoners of Altona," for 20th-Fox release. Wagner will play Miss Loren's husband. He arrives in Hamburg on Monday to start five weeks of location filming there, followed by scenes in northern Italy.

tiff.industry®

stop in toronto and start something big.

In 2013, 4743 industry delegates from over 80 countries attended the Toronto International Film Festival, resulting in over 45 film sales. This year, make it happen in Toronto.

Registration opens May 1.

Visit tiff.net/industry to learn about the services and programming that we provide.

tiff. toronto
international
film festival®
sept. 4-14.14

LEAD SPONSOR

Bell

MAJOR SPONSORS



RBC
Royal Bank®

L'ORÉAL®
PARIS

VISA

MAJOR SUPPORTERS



TELEFILM
CANADA

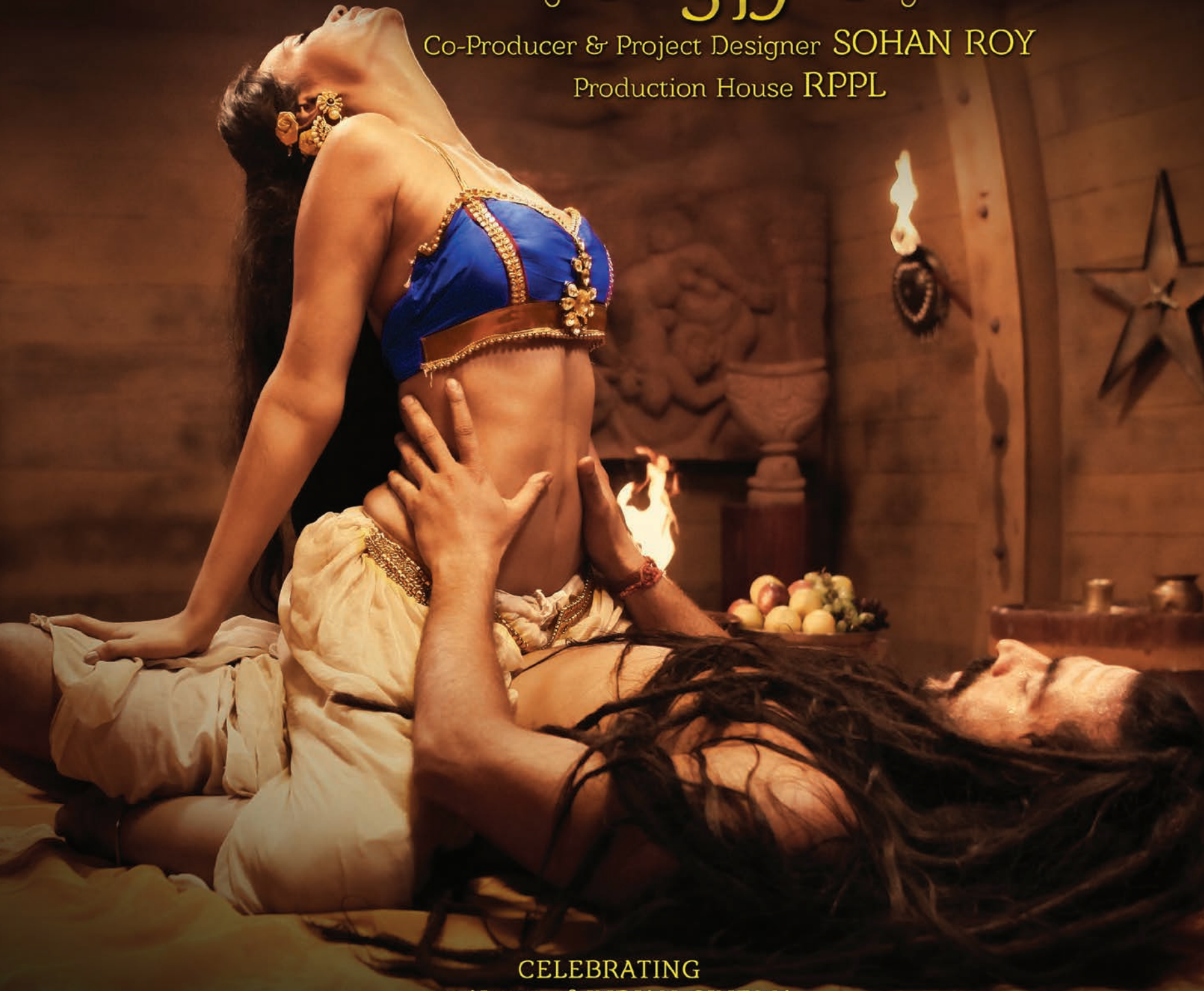
© Toronto International Film Festival Inc.

Dr. GEORGE JOHN presents
A RUPESH PAUL MOVIE

KAMASUTRA

3D

Co-Producer & Project Designer SOHAN ROY
Production House RPPL



CELEBRATING
100 Years of INDIAN CINEMA

The Epic of all Epics

The most awaited movie of the year

For sales enquiry contact

Email: info@kamasutra3d.in | Phone: +91 8129081090 | Website: www.kamasutra3d.in

Visit us at booth no 258 @ Marriott